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Presidential Address

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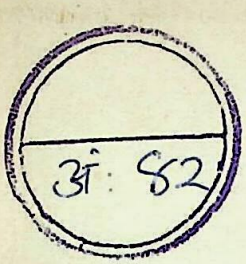
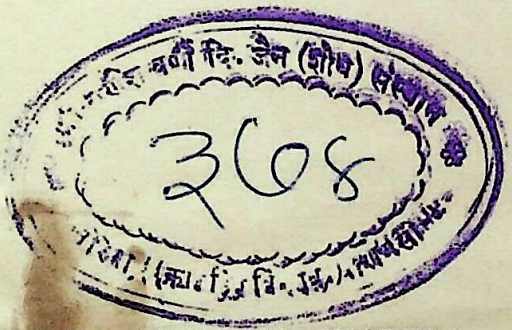


PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

41st session of the
Indian Philosophical Congress

BANARAS HINDU UNIVERSITY
1967



KALIDAS BHATTACHARYYA
VISVA-BHARATI, SANTINIKETAN

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ग्रन्थ-कार्ड

श्री गणेश वर्णी दि० जैन (शोध) संस्थान

ग्रन्थागार

नरिया, वाराणसी-५

ग्रन्थ नाम Residental Address List Session of the Indian Philosophical Congress BHU 1967

लेखक – Kalidas Bhattacharyya

लेनेवाले का नाम	देनेकी तिथि	लेनेवालेका हस्ताक्षर	लौटानेकी तिथि

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THE CONCEPT OF PHILOSOPHY

Introduction

Though philosophy is older than any systematic discipline we are not always sure as to what it is exactly about. The worst part of it is that the dominance of the present-day sciences has confounded us all the more. Sciences, we are told, have covered the entire field of knowledge, and they are more firmly established than ever before. Either, then, there is no *cognitive* field left for philosophy, it being concerned with certain dubious values and prescriptions only, or it is nothing more than a linguistic analysis of propositions used by laymen, sciences and what has hitherto been called metaphysics. Our task in the present paper is to show that this is not a correct assessment. We begin straightway with indicating what special field of discovery there could be for philosophy.

Section I

Central thesis

Philosophy is a systematic study of the *basic structure* of the universe that as much includes all that is self as all that is outside the self. *Structure*, of course, is normally a static concept and may be disliked by those who prefer a dynamic view of the world. But as it is not necessary, linguistically or otherwise, that a structure has to be static we may be allowed to use the word without any reservation.

What philosophy is primarily concerned with is this basic structure. The adjective 'basic' is crucial here : it is all that distinguishes philosophy from sciences.

The structure of the world with which sciences like Physics and Chemistry are concerned is still empirical in the sense that, though not itself sense-perceived, it is yet imagined only in the context of accounting for empirical phenomena ; and, not

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merely that, it is also imagined as somehow *in line with* these phenomena and, therefore, *of the same stuff with them*, maybe a bit too rarefied — in other words, always imaginable as more or less concrete, though less concrete than what is ordinarily called empirical, and never all too abstract. It is empirical for a third reason also — as a hypothesis it has to be verified as somehow relevant to some data of observation.

In contrast, the structure that philosophy is interested in is confessedly non-empirical (*a priori*). It is non-empirical in three senses. First, there is no logical necessity that it should be known only in the context of certain empirical phenomena. It may be that as a matter of fact we discover, or speak of, it in some empirical context; but, once discovered, it stands with a peculiar certitude of its own that could never be found in any empirical hypothesis or law. In other words, the philosophical structure does not stand or fall with the empirical phenomena that occasion its discovery. It is discovered as an autonomous structure, only *happening* to be related to all that is empirical. Whatever relation there is between them is largely unintelligible. Some would call it *free reference*, some *reflexion*, some *copying*, *symbolisation*, *self-negation* etc. Some, again, in their zeal for ignoring the empirical have condemned it as all an illusion.

This is the first sense in which the philosophical structure is to be called non-empirical. Though in the empirical context, the structure is somehow discovered *a priori*. Not that the entire structure is revealed all at once. Different constituents of it may be discovered at different times, in different empirical contexts and in different moods, or some or many of them may just be deduced from others discovered directly in empirical contexts. But whatever that may be, these constituents either form a system or a hierarchy or a revolving spiral or what not?

This method of discovering the *a priori* in the empirical

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could easily be called 'intuition', except for the fact that the term 'intuition' is often used in a mystical sense as something esoteric and, therefore, non-communicative. The method of discovering the *a priori* is not esoteric that way. The *a priori* constituents are as much public as the data of sense-perception. Anyone could perceive them if he only liked to and tried, and should he fail in spite of his best effort his attention could be directed to these through demonstration, hints and persuation, quite as much as when someone fails to perceive a tiny star in the sky that another has perceived. Privacy is as much a problem in the field of philosophy as with regard to the data of sense-perception. The *a priori* constituents have the further merit that they, as they are discovered, are discovered in interconnexion, and many of these constituents are actually deduced from others already discovered.

That some apriorities can be deduced from other apriorities is evident in Logic and Mathematics. That even the *discovered* apriorities, those, viz. which are directly found in empirical contexts, are interconnected, even though these contexts are not, is not merely what the philosophers who have discovered them certify, it has to be accepted on the further ground that otherwise there would be no explanation as to why the logical and mathematical principles which, basically, are forms of our subjective reasoning could at all apply to the world of facts outside. This is intelligible only on the supposition that there is in the objective world a whole system of reason corresponding to the system of reason in our mind. This objective system is not primarily a system *of empirical data*, for if the rational system has only happened to connect empirical data, it could well have not done that. Even in the absence of empirical data it could connect only symbols. If it is at all necessary for a system to be a system of certain things, these latter could well be the pure Platonic Ideas—we mean, forms and categories like space, time, number, etc. Or it may be that

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these Ideas, forms and categories are as much relations as terms—relations and terms, one might say, in alternation.

This method of discovering the basic constituents of the philosophical structure has often been called *transcendental* or *phenomenological* or *intuitive* ; and as supplemented by the method of deducing other constituents of the structure, it has sometimes been called *geometrical*, generally the *rationalistic* method.

So far with the first sense in which the basic structure that philosophy seeks is to be understood as non-empirical, as opposed to the empirical structure that sciences like Physics and Chemistry seek. The philosophical structure is non-empirical (*a priori*) in a second important sense also. Neither its constituents nor the entire structure can in any way be imagined as of the same stuff with empirical phenomena, only a bit too rarefied. Electrons and protons may still be conceived as matter thinned to the maximum conceivable degree or, at least, in line with physical energies with which we are familiar in our empirical life. Ether or a field may similarly be conceived as the thinnest imaginable canvas or in the image of some other empirical thing or phenomenon. But none of the things that are truly philosophical can be conceived that way. The reason is as follows :

Scientific entities are either discovered through careful analysis or admitted as useful hypotheses about agents, collocations or behaviours. None of the philosophical entities, however, are of the nature of hypothesis ; they are either discovered through a type of analysis (helped, it may be, by suggestions and analogies, and even by pseudo-inferences) or deduced through formal inference from the philosophical entities already discovered. Now, what is deduced from certain entities must be of the same stuff with those entities — it may be, in a different combination, extension or rarefaction. The

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characteristic novelty of philosophical entities, then, is to be found primarily in those which are discovered through analysis.

Discovery through analysis—and, therefore, analysis itself—is of various kinds according as with what ease one can say that what is now discovered was there prior to the discovery. In many cases of reflective discovery we unhesitatingly say that what is now discovered was already there, but doubts creep in very soon. When asked, for example, whether the tic tic sound of a clock that, paradoxically enough, I noticed only as it stopped was there before I noticed it, I do indeed say "yes", but somehow I wonder also why I did not notice it earlier. Similarly, when on being asked to find out how many gaps in the foliage in a picture look like birds I discover *after some time* that there is such a gap here, I wonder why I did not notice it a second before. The wonder in both the cases, particularly in the second one, shows that I, to whatever extent, hesitate to say that what is now discovered was there before, though I cannot at the same time deny this. This hesitation is due to the fact that I find no reason why I could not notice it earlier. Lack of the requisite amount of attention is no explanation here, for nobody knows what amount of attention is required for such noticing. Lack of interest or training is equally no explanation, for interest is practically another name for attention, and lack of training would just be stating over again the bare fact that I did not notice it before, or it would mean that I had the *capacity* to have noticed it before but that the capacity did not mature into actual noticing. In the second alternative, however, either this *capacity* is only another name for the bare fact that I did not notice it before, or, if it is anything more positive, we must say that it was latent before noticing and became patent when I noticed ; but this last alternative is again meaningless, for a capacity which, as a capacity, is already a latent affair could not

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have a second degree of latency.[1] There was thus no defect *on my side.* Nothing objective also had intervened between myself and the object now noticed. This is why I hesitate. If a thing was there and yet I did not notice it, this could be either because there was someting wrong with me or because something objective had intervened. I hesitate because nothing of the sort had happened. At the same time, however, I cannot also deny that the thing now noticed was there before the noticing. The inevitable conclusion is that there is something wrong with that object itself. We have to say that till the noticing the object was not in the form in which it now stands before me. 'Noticed' means *distinguished.* One may say, therefore, that before discovery the object stood undistinguishedly fused, it was not in its proper form in which it is presented to us when discovered.[2]

In the case of the tic tic sound, or the supposed bird in the foliage, there is still the possibility that psychologists might

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1. To postulate anything like the *ajñāna* of the Advaitist would be too immature, at any rate an *ad hoc* hypothesis only.

2. The distinguished form alone is the *proper* form, because it is discovered through reflection and reflection is a better guide to reality than unreflective experience, though we cannot say why. The logic that if there are two successive awarenesses of the same thing the later awareness is *as a matter of fact* preferred everywhere will be of little avail here, for reflection may well be succeeded by lapse into unreflective experience. Nor can it be said that reflection is preferred on the ground that while unreflective experience can be interpreted without a remainder in terms of reflection the converse is not true, for neither of the two can be so interpreted in terms of the other. There is thus no logical preference for reflection. The preference is alogical (not, of course, in the sense in which Carnap and others use the term). The best defence for reflection, *if any*, would be the pragmatic consideration that with the help of distinguished entities we can work better than if we had not reflected at all and that the more we reflect the more efficient our life would be. If this pragmatic consideration is ruled out there would be no special case for reflection. Choice of reflection would then be absolute.

It is always possible to hold a thesis which is the exact opposite of this. It is always possible, in other words, to hold that unreflective experience alone keeps us nearer reality and reflection leads us astray. This choice of unreflective life would be as absolute as the other choice.

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succeed in calculating the exact amount of attention or interest required for noticing it. Ideally, therefore, it is not necessary that in such cases one should postulate objective fusedness somehow developing into objective distinctness. In sciences also no such postulation is necessary. For, the entities that are, in sciences, carefully, and with subtle instruments, analysed out (provided they are actually observed and not hypotheses) could not be observed before only because the care (which includes attention, interest and precaution) and the instruments in question were absent. But there are cases—and here we enter the province of philosophy—where there is no scope for instruments or calculus of attention for noticing. To take a few instances :

In our daily life we are aware of space and time as only adjectivally fused with empirical things and events. A thing, we say, has extension, shape and size, it is to the right or left of another thing and so much distant from it. A thing, again, is either old or new, fresh or decaying ; an event is either past, present or future, either before or after another or synchronous with it. In normal life we understand space and time in these ways. But when we speak of space and time in philosophy and study their characteristics we take them apart from the empirical things and events to which they have so long been adjectival and consider them as *substantives* so far, i. e., *as categories*. In normal life things of the world are not distinguished into substances and attributes. They are taken each as an integral unit, only used now as continuing and now as acting on other things in such and such manners, etc. But in philosophy we seek to distinguish substances from attributes, so much so that we get interested in the nature of substances *qua* substance and of attributes *qua* attribute. Similarly with the self. Normally, I-ness or mine-ness is felt as just a character of the body or some bodily and mental states or functions,

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distinguishing these from bodies, states and functions that are taken as *others'*. ("Other's" is here an adjective.) In philosophy, on the other hand, the *I* is understood as an autonomous substantive alongside *yous* and *hes* and this *I* and the *yous* and *hes* are all called self. Philosophy studies the nature of these selves *qua* self and the relations they bear to one another and to other things.

This metaphysical autonomy of space, time, self, etc., is evident from another consideration also. As abstractions they are never merely verbal ; they are not abstractions that are only posited by words, unmanipulable by themselves. Take, e. g., the case of a blue patch. The *blue colour* here, if it is to be considered by itself, is a mere verbal abstraction, because nothing more can be said of, or deduced from, it. But the *patch* considered by itself is exactly what is called *space*, and it is with this *space* that the entire system, called Euclidean Geometry, is concerned.[3]

What is true of space is true equally of time, substance, self, etc.

Like space, time, self, etc., distinguished in philosophical analysis as autonomous substantive entities, *existence* too, which at the level of common unreflective life appears adjectivally fused with things that are said to exist, stands in philosophical analysis as autonomously substantive ; and similarly with *truth* and other categories against which the modern Empiricists have grown an unseemly allergy.

That *existence* as an autonomous substantive could be revealed in philosophical thought is strongly suggested by the fact that the existence part of a blue flower, which in unreflective experience is apprehended only implicitly as undistinguishedly fused with that flower, comes to be asserted explicitly

3. If in Optics they speak so much of blue and other colours, this is because the colours are taken inevitably as in space, not by themselves.

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as distinguished when somebody challenges me and I reply, "This blue flower *exists*." In this act of distinguishing, the existence part tends to get separated and placed in the proper perspective, as it were. It cannot be said that the existence of a thing is but a unique relation (say, coherence or tallying) it had been bearing to other things and that when we explicitly say "It exists" we insist only on this relation now explicitly stated. This cannot be said, because normally no object is understood as in relation with another object unless both these objects have already existed. If still one insist that by themselves, i. e., apart from the relation, the objects could yet *subsist*, this would amount to saying that they as verbal abstractions are only adjectival to the relation in question and that the relation, therefore, is the substantive existent here. Should one still insist that the relation *does not exist*, that it is only another name for existence itself, we ask — is this *existence* itself a subsistent or not ? If a subsistent, our reply would be that two subsistents do not make an existent, and if it is not itself a subsistent what could it be but what we have called *substantive existence* ? Thus, whichever way we go, there is a strong presumption for explicit existence to be an autonomous substantive. This is at the root of the famous Ontological Argument.

Existence, again, is not a not-further-analysable common feature of things that exist, it mattering little whether that common feature is a universal or an attribute or a behaviour. It cannot be such a common feature, because the things which are to have that common feature have got to exist already, and there would be no point in distinguishing this primary existence as *svarūpasattā* from existence as a common feature.

What is true of *existence* is true, we repeat, of *truth* and similar categories of entities.

The basic distinction between empirical entities with which common life and science are concerned and entities which

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form the subject-matter of philosophy is evident from another consideration also. When in common life and science A is distinguished from out of a total situation X what remains over is definitely characterisable as B = X – A. In common life and science, in other words, what is distinguished and what is left over are of the same stuff — there is no category-difference between them. Philosophical analysis differs sharply on this issue. When a philosophical entity is distinguished from out of a daily life situation there is no *remainder* left over. There is only a sort of transcendence. The pure *space* of philosophy, e. g., just transcends what is called *extension* (which is an adjectival character) of empirical things. If anything is left over when this pure space is distinguished in philosophical analysis, it is the same old adjectival extension from which the analysis started.

As contrasted with the structure that science is concerned with, the philosophical structure of the world is *a priori* in still another sense. A sizeable part of what is called 'scientific structure' is of the nature of hypothesis and so requires verification as being in whatever way relevent to empirical phenomena. But nothing like this is called for in philosophy. Philosophy has no need of hypotheses. Constituents of the basic structure are, as we have already noted, revealed *a priori*, though, it may be, in empirical contexts—and, since as revealed they are revealed as autonomous, they are in no need of proving their relevance for sense-experience. Self-evidence of the constituents of the structure and their *order* (which is either their system or their hierarchy or something else) are all that is required for philosophy. In science, on the other hand, as it is commonly understood, the criterion of final acceptance is not merely *order* (which it shares in common with philosophy) but also the evidence of sense-experience to which all scientific hypotheses have necessarily or prescriptively to be referred.

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Section II

A few objections disposed of

Before we proceed further a few possible objections need be disposed of.

Objection I. Is not philosophy an attempt to *understand* the empirical world and is it not so far in line with scientific theories ?

If one says that philosophers try to *understand* the world we need not object. We only add that 'understanding' here is no other than what we have called 'reflective study'— a study that, in effect, reveals the basic structure and its constituents. They have, we admit, called the basic structure 'objective reason', but we have already seen that it is no reason *for the empirical world* — rational principles are not constrained to connect empirical data. They are autonomous.

Objection II. Has not Kant claimed that apriorities are real only as applicable to, as somehow relevant to, sense-data ?

Kant could say this only because he took the *a priori* principles as no more than postulates. In line with modern Empiricists he held that postulation is no form of assertion, a postulate being only *used* for bringing certain data into an order. The only difference between Kant and these modern thinkers is that while for the latter all postulates are changeable conventions, for Kant the apriorities are unchangeable postulates (called 'presuppositions').

Our position on this issue is that the apriorities are not only unchanging principles, they are also asserted by the corresponding *a priori* propositions : they are *discovered.* In a way Kant himself has admitted this when he says that apriorities are not hypotheses.

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Objection III. A Kantian might still argue, in the line of Husserl's phenomenology, that apriorities are only subjective presuppositions *with existence bracketted*, or, in the line of some modern thinkers, that they are only subsistent, subsistence being understood as more primary in status than existence.

But the first point is obviously untenable. Existence does not belong to objective entities only. Mental states also exist. Should one argue that mental states that are taken as existent are none of them properly subjective, as they are *objects* to a sort of awareness, called introspection, which itself is no object to another introspection, even then we rejoin that there is no reason why this second-level awareness should on that ground be deprived of existence. It would be more reasonable to hold that it is existent, but that its existence is apprehended in a way different from how the existence of objects is apprehended. Its existence is apprehended in an inward attitude, as distinct from the awareness of objects in the outward attitude. Common usage too does not deprive the word 'existence' of this import, and there is no reason why a word should be prescribed for a particular import unless it be a technical term.

Against the thesis that apriorities are only *subsistent* our reply would be as follows :

Subsistence is not more primary in status than existence. It is only in the context of existence that one can at all speak of subsistents. The subsistent is only a *possible* existent, as something which is *necessarily* to mature into existence or something that having once appeared as existent has somehow forfeited that status, as when an illusion is corrected.

The subsistentialist might claim that it is only *ratio cognoscendi* that existence is more primary but that *ratio essendi* what is more primary is subsistence, because existence is capable of being mathematically constructed out of subsistents. But this claim

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is not justified. If existence can be constructed out of subsistents by the process of addition or multiplication, subsistence also could be constructed out of existents by the reverse process of subtraction or division. There is nothing so far to determine which of the two is more primary. While, however, the situation is so far indeterminate there is one deciding factor, viz. that things are always initially presented as existent—we always begin with taking the presentation as existent. In all fairness, therefore, subsistence, rather than existence, should be taken as a logical construction—one might say, a logical abstraction. A whole could be mathematically constructed out of parts, but what if the whole itself is presented from the beginning ? Often it is the whole which is first presented and parts are de-constructed out of it, and even in most of the cases where parts are first presented the whole that is constructed out of them also happens to be a presentation quite as much as the parts are.

Objection IV. Are *a priori* principles any better than changeable conventions ? Have not new Logics and new Geometries been constructed on non-Aristotelian and non-Euclidean lines ? We reply as follows :

We do not deny that new Logics and Geometries have been constructed, nor that they are more serviceable because more generalised or more appropriate in particular fields of enquiry. Yet on one vital point the traditional Aristotelian Logic and the Geometry of Euclid have scored over the new contestants. The presuppositions of Aristotelian Logic and Euclidean Geometry are not mere serviceable instruments to construct a Logic or a Geometry with, no mere useful tautologies. Whether one wants it or not, these presuppositions are felt as factually true, either in conjunction with empirical data or in themselves. If, as the modern Empiricists and scientists claim, they cannot successfully account for certain subtle relations and phenomena,

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this does not necessitate their total abrogation. They could well be generalised in a way without affecting their native claim to *existence*. Generalisation does indeed involve conceptual construction, but it need not be conceptual to a degree that would forfeit their claim to existence, unless, of course, some of them are openly labelled 'irrational or imaginary devices' designed solely for effective manipulation. If some of the modern thinkers have insisted that not merely *some* but *all* these constructions—even all, or at least most, of the basic concepts and theories of physical sciences—are of the nature of non-existential constructions, we need have no quarrel with them; we would only side with those who are for *normal* human procedure and *normal* attitude of the scientists. The normal attitude of the scientists is that, unless specifically branded as *barely working*, all hypotheses and concepts have existential import. Heavens would not fall if one should think that way.

Objection V. Modern Empiricists have condemned the metaphysical structure on the ground that propositions regarding this structure (and its constituents) are all meaningless, because unverifiable, as contrasted with propositions regarding a scientific structure (and its constituents) which can all be verified directly or indirectly, in a strong or in a weak manner. To say that these propositions are meaningless amounts, in effect, to saying that the structure and its constituents with which philosophy is concerned are all illegitimate hypostatisations due to misuse of language.

It is difficult, however, to follow these points. One can understand 'direct verification'. One can also understand that the scope of direct verification is very narrow and so permit other types of verification. But there is no reason why these other types should be limited to the few they have listed. One may add still other types or understand indirect and weak verifications liberally enough to accommodate metaphysical proposi-

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tions. Although metaphysical entities are discovered *a priori*, philosophers worth the name have always referred them to empirical phenomena if only to make their position intelligible to common people, and this they have done either by way of inferring them from, or constructing them out of, empirical situations or by showing that they are strongly suggested by these.

To denote these metaphysical entities they have often found words already in use, and in case they discovered a new apriority, they either coined a new word or used a word, already in use, with a newer adjective or because it came nearest to indicating the apriority discovered. These newly coined words, and the words already in use but now being used in slightly different senses, found place, in course of time, in popular vocabulary.

One may add that modern Empiricists, while recording different uses of a word, have not always noted fine nuances and overtones and have systematically ignored the uses, in other languages, of the synonym or the near synonym of that word.

It should be noted in this connexion that these Empiricists have not condemned all that the traditional philosophy is concerned with. They have, for example, exempted categories like *space*, *time*, *substance*, *causality*, *class*, *order*, *negation*, etc. They insist indeed that philosophy has nothing to do with these except cataloguing the different uses of the corresponding words and hold that the proper authority to deal with them is not philosophy, but the sciences that are directly concerned with them, viz. the physical sciences, Mathematics and Logic. We reply as follows :

As consciously used by these sciences, Mathematics and Logic, the categories in question are no doubt studied in these disciplines, and that thoroughly ; yet they are not studied

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there *in their own interest*—they are studied only in the aspect of their *use*. Physical sciences and Mathematics are in little need of studying the *exact nature* of space, time, substance, causality, etc., and Logic, similarly, regarding the concepts of negation, order, etc.; nor are they truly concerned with the question whether these categories are real metaphysical entities, whether objective or subjective, or even whether the words used are meaningful or meaningless. The maximum that these disciplines do is to find out, through analysis, the characteristics, *as in use*, of space, time, substance, causality, negation, order, etc., and, if possible, to interrelate them through these characteristics.

This does not, however, mean, we may be told, that the task of studying the exact nature and status of these categories should devolve on traditional philosophy. In recent days a third discipline has tended to usurp this function. It is the discipline called 'Philosophy of Science' (and one may add 'Philosophy of Mathematics' and 'Philosophy of Logic').

But it is difficult to see where this new discipline differs from the sciences themselves in so far as they use the categories *self-consciously* and *critically*, unless it be a popular version of modern science or a semi-romantic cosmology attuned to it.

Modern scientists, mathematicians and logicians have grown interested in the study of these categories only because they found that certain phenomena—micro or macro—could not be adequately accounted for by the traditional categories. Two courses were left to them—either to generalise these categories or to replace them by such alternative postulates as are more serviceable in particular fields of enquiry; and naturally they had to study these generalisations and alternative postulates systematically. Does the so-called Philosophy of Science, Philosophy of Mathematics or Philosophy of Logic do anything more? We are not in the least concerned with popular

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versions of science and semi-romantic cosmologies passing under the name 'scientific'.

Section III

Further clarification

In Section I we have shown that in philosophical analysis truths are revealed in a form of unprecedented purity that is never experienced in ordinary unreflective life. While in ordinary unreflective life they fail to distinguish themselves and appear only as undefined adjuncts—a sort of overtone, as it were—to concrete empirical situations, in philosophical analysis they stand revealed in their pristine autonomy as distinct substantives, though not unrelated to one another.

Is this development from undefined fusedness to clear distinction (or, conversely, the lapse of the latter into the former) an *objective* process independent of *my* distinguishing (or *my* lapse), or is it only this subjective distinguishing (or lapse) itself ?

Neither of the two alternatives is immediately acceptable. Were the development (or the lapse) an objective process entirely independent of my distinguishing (or lapse) there could be no explanation as to when and why there should be development (or lapse). Equally, it cannot be the mere subjective process of distinguishing (or lapse). For, I do also feel that it is an objective process. Further, while in all cases of mere subjective distinguishing the item distinguished presents itself as coordinate in status with what is left over, the latter being as much distinguished as the former, this is not what happens in philosophical analysis. What is said to have been left over here does not stand equally distinguished : what is left over in a case of philosophical analysis is not the total

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situation started with *minus* the truth distinguished, but just the old total situation itself. The distinguished truth and the total unreflective situation stand in a peculiar relation to each other : even when A is taken away from X what remains over is not X-A, but that X itself. This is precisely what is meant by 'transcendence'. When a *form* is distinguished from an empirical situation the *matter* that is said to be left over is wholly indefinite.

Nor will it be of any avail to hold that it is *both objective and subjective*—an objective distinction that yet somehow hangs on to subjective distinguishing. This would be a height of anomaly in any *cognitive* situation. One could admit it in aesthetic and probably also in moral situations where it is impossible to *assert* anything as a *fact*. Beauty or a moral value is never asserted except half-heartedly, the so-called assertion being always consciously apprehended as *to a person*—either myself or another. In a cognitive situation, on the other hand, there is always categorical assertion. In normal sensuous perception the object is asserted in complete neglect of ego-centricity. Should one insist that this ego-centricity ought not to be neglected or that the impersonal object is only what *ought to be*, not what actually is, it being, from the actual point of view, inextricably bound up with the person perceiving, it could be pointed out that this neglect of the subjective is an accomplished fact from the very beginning, so that there is no question of *ought* in the objective attitude started with. It is not impossible, we admit, that with supreme effort, or as a result of systematic training in the realisation of the subjective (through systematic appraisal of phenomena like correction of error), one could get installed in the subjective attitude. But then he has *asserted the subjective*, and the so-called object is, from this point of view, no more than a function of the subject—call it *intention*, *meaning*, *reference*, *self-negation* and what

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not ? In any case, there is always categorical assertion, either of the object or of the subjective. The two attitudes—the objective and the subjective—are at the most two alternatives. There is no question of their synthesis anywhere, such synthesis being intelligible only in aesthetic and moral situations.

While, however, in ordinary sensuous perception there is no question of subject-object synthesis, the case of philosophical discovery, even though it is cognitive, is a little different. As already pointed out, there is an oscillation here from the subjective to the object, and *vice versa*, from the very beginning. As, however, in a cognitive situation there is no possibility of any subject-object synthesis we have to say that this oscillation is but alternation : one could view metaphysical entities alternatively from the objective or the subjective standpoint. When a metaphysical entity is viewed from the objective standpoint whatever subjectivity persists is only felt as what has to be got rid of ; and conversely when the view-point is subjective. The former prescribes a progressive discipline in the elimination of self in order that a metaphysical entity may shine in its pure objectivity. The latter prescribes a progressive discipline in the negation of object, as a result of which metaphysical entities will progressively assert themselves as purer and purer functions of the subject. In the objective metaphysical attitude the pure metaphysical objects find their locus in a pure objective field, and the more the shadow of the subject recedes the more they reveal themselves in pure objectivity as related to one another. In the subjective metaphysical attitude, on the other hand, the metaphysical entities as *intentions* find their locus in the pure subject and progressively reveal themselves in this light, which means that each higher intention is more of pure subjectivity than the lower.

In Section I the philosophical entities were described as if they were pure objects. There is the alternative approach, we

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now find, to view these as pure functions of the subject in a progressive order of purer and purer subjectivity. An apriority or, for the matter of that, anything to be an impersonal object is, from this point of view, inconceivable ; and if in ordinary sensuous perception, and also at higher stages, things have actually appeared as impersonal objects, it is, from this point of view, just a *given inconceivability*, a basic surd that has somehow been put up with. If, again, in this attitude of progressive realisation of subjectivity some metaphysical entity is discovered as more of the nature of subjectivity than another, this latter is not for that reason a transcendent object, in the sense of being to whatever extent independent of the subject : it is only less subjective in the sense that further withdrawal into subjectivity is possible, the whole range of intentions being, however, located in the field of subjectivity. The apparent objectivity here is no given inconceivability, no surd, but just negatively what has to be gone beyond, though all the while in the field of subjectivity, and, positively—if any positive interpretation is needed—a diabolical move on the part of the subject itself, a move which, however, of its very nature, demands self-annihilation.

Philosophy, we have seen, is the *a priori* discovery of the metaphysical structure in the sense that its constituents are discovered *a priori* in some form of interrelation. We can now put the matter in a slightly different way in order that a serious misunderstanding regarding the nature of philosophy may be removed. The other way of putting this would be as follows :

Inasmuch as in *a priori* discovery the constituents of the metaphysical structure stand *defined* from the beginning, and the definitions too stand as absolutely related with one another, philosophy is but a systematic study of pure *a priori definitions*. These *a priori* definitions are none other than those which, from the empirical point of view, are normally called '*ideal* defini-

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tions'—definitions, in other words, that could never be derived from empirical situations through any method of computation. In empirical situations they are only vaguely sensed, and philosophical analysis brings them to light as they are in themselves.

When, however, philosophy is understood this way one may with a good deal of plausibility ask whether even *empirical* definitions of these constituents, derived through different methods of computation, like averaging the empirical situations or following up their inherent trend, would not coincide with the ideal definitions. We find no *a priori* reason why they should not—rather, from the *a priori* point of view it is always expected that honest empirical computation will reach up to the ideal in the long run. But—and this is the central point—the question of such coincidence is only from the *a priori* point of view. This concidence is only what *ought to be*. There is no *empirical* evidence to substantiate the claim. A genuine empiricist who studies the constituents, otherwise called 'categories', in a wholly empirical attitude, either as they have actually worked in different empirical pursuits or as the corresponding words have functioned in languages, finds no indication anywhere as to whether his findings would agree or not with the ideal definitions. For him, in fact, there is no question whatsoever of the ideal : he cannot but ignore it altogether. It is only the apriorist who views experience as necessarily coming up to the ideal.

We are thus in the presence of another alternation. This time it is the alternation between the *a priori* and the empirical methods. Neither of these would gain or lose anything because of the other. To talk, therefore, of the two methods as supplementing each other would only be talking nonsense. Philosophy employs the *a priori* method, sciences the empirical one. If philosophy, in the *a priori* attitude, has claimed that

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empirical computation necessarily reaches up to the ideal, this does not mean that the ideal is confirmed by experience ; for the whole thing, we repeat, is from the point of view of the ideal. The experience that the apriorist speaks of is not experience *per se*, but only the *a priori* anticipation of experience.

It would be of little avail to argue, as some have done, that experience to reach up to the ideal is after all a demonstrable fact. It is no use arguing, in other words, that the more the number of instances, or the wider the field of investigation, the greater the confirmation of an ideal by experience. That this is not so can be shown in two ways. First, the widening of the field or increase in the number of instances could lend empirical support to the ideal if only no contrary instance had come on the way. Often, however, we do come across contrary instances. The probability in such cases is relied on *only because we had initially started with the ideal.* The law of integration is valid only when the upper limit is known. Secondly, even when no contrary instance is met on the way there is no *empirical* guarantee that it will not be met with in future. The faith that it will not be met with is wholly *a priori* ; and to say that it will not be met with because it has not been met with would only be begging the question. Anyway, the closed *all* as the ideal is either wholly *a priori* or, in case it is empirical, it is just a given fact in experience to start with. In either case it is always what we *begin with*, and when we demonstrate arriving at it this is all a conceptual reconstruction.

But does not science, one may ask, often resort to hypotheses, and is not hypothesis an *a priori* construction ? We reply — the hypotheses of science are never genuinely *a priori*, never such as had stood undistinguishedly fused in the empirical situation started with and distinguished in their autonomy through some process of analysis. Construction of hypotheses

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in science is only an extension or, rather, a dimension of the empirical method itself. They may at most be spoken of in the image of *a priori* presuppositions and as such may be called *relative* apriorities, widely accepted conventions, postulates, etc. But they are empirical from the beginning to the end. Thus, though for science observation and hypotheses are supplementary processes this throws no light on the relation between genuine apriorities and empirical situations.

Should one still argue that science, in so far as it uses *a priori* logic for the construction of hypotheses and also for their deductive verification, has somehow synthesised the *a priori* and the empirical, the reply is not far to see. Empiricists themselves have shown that this *logic* is not *a priori* in our sense. According to them, logical principles are either empirical abstractions or generalisations, or, as the modern Empiricists have held, they are only linguistic conventions widely accepted by the people of a certain age and often in the interest of particular systems under construction, and, therefore, susceptible of change in other ages and in other contexts. It may be that this interpretation of logical principles is not ultimately tenable : it may be that abstraction or generalisation itself involves *logic*, it may also be that the fundamental law of logic, viz. the law of contradiction, is not amenable to such interpretation. But, first, these Empiricists will never admit this, and, secondly, even if this be true that would only show that while science cannot do without philosophy the latter can well ignore the former.

When all this is said one might still ask if the so-called philosophical structure and its constituents could not be taken as hypotheses for explaining empirical situations and accepted as valid or invalid according as the explanation succeeds or not. We reply, philosophy is not for explaining any empirical situation, it is only for discovering the structure and its consti-

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tuents ; and if in the arguments and analyses it puts forward there is reference to empirical situations, it is primarily to draw the attention of those who, steeped in empirical situations, have not perceived the structure and the constituents, and secondarily for creating confidence in the heart of those who, though they have learnt the art of philosophical analysis, are yet attached to the world of experience. Secondly — and this is crucial — the sweeping theories of philosophers are no match for scientific hypotheses which are precise, thorough and well-established, unless, of course, the former are taken as explanations of the world *as a whole* at different levels. But, then, the very concept of *world as a whole* is illegitimate from the empirical point of view. This concept is either *a priori* or sheer nonsense. From the empirical point of view the world as a whole is nothing definite and positive, it is only another name for the unending aggregation of different gestalts which alone are real. Science starts with definite empirical gestalts and breaks these up into different parts to study the rules of their combination, and when this is done it applies these rules to construct conceptually higher and higher gestalts or smaller and smaller parts but never talks of a *highest* gestalt or a *smallest* part, except sometimes in light speculative vein. For philosophy, on the other hand, the *world as a whole* is a positive entity, the counterpart of the *a priori* structure that it discovers, a counterpart, however, which is not independent of the structure but just its *a priori* function, the structure either positing it *a priori* or negating itself *a priori*. The world as a whole is only an *a priori* anticipation by the *a priori* structure, nothing transcendent.

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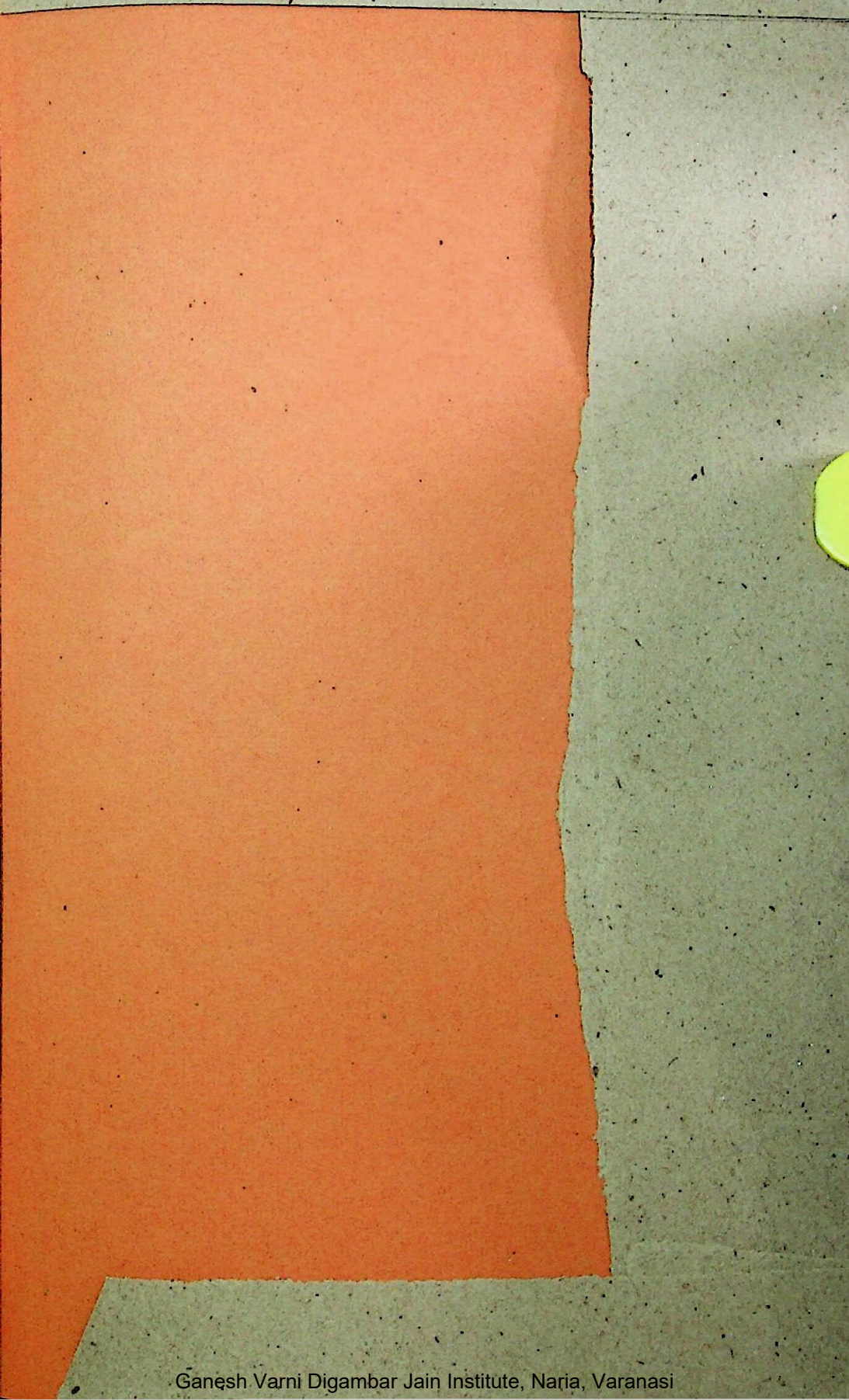

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